

MINIMUM STANDARD HEALTH PROTOCOLS



CHECKLIST FOR ZOOS, AQUARIUMS, NATURAL CAVERNS, AND SIMILAR FACILITIES

Zoos, aquariums, natural caverns, and similar facilities, may operate up to 75% of the total listed occupancy (or, for zoos, 75% of the normal operating limits as determined by the zoo owner). Local public zoos, aquariums, natural caverns, and similar facilities may operate only if permitted by the local government. All employees and customers must wear a face covering (over the nose and mouth) wherever it is not feasible to maintain six feet of social distancing from another individual not in the same household.

The following are the minimum recommended health protocols for all zoos, aquariums, natural caverns, and similar facilities choosing to operate in Texas. Zoos, aquariums, natural caverns, and similar facilities may adopt additional protocols consistent with their specific needs and circumstances to help protect the health and safety of all employees and customers.

The virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to others by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. Even if an infected person is only mildly ill, the people they spread it to may become seriously ill or even die, especially if that person is 65 or older with pre-existing health conditions that place them at higher risk. Because of the hidden nature of this threat, everyone should rigorously follow the practices specified in these protocols, all of which facilitate a safe and measured reopening of Texas. The virus that causes COVID-19 is still circulating in our communities. We should continue to observe practices that protect everyone, including those who are most vulnerable.

Please note, public health guidance cannot anticipate every unique situation. Zoos, aquariums, natural caverns, and similar facilities should stay informed and take actions based on common sense and wise judgment that will protect health and support economic revitalization. Zoos, aquariums, natural caverns, and similar facilities should also be mindful of federal and state employment laws and workplace safety standards.

Health protocols for your employees, contractors, and volunteers (“staff”):

- Train all staff on appropriate cleaning and disinfection, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.
- Screen staff before coming into the zoo, aquarium, natural cavern, or similar facility:
 - Send home any staff who has any of the following new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19:

– Cough	– Sore throat
– Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	– Loss of taste or smell
– Chills	– Diarrhea
– Repeated shaking with chills	– Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
– Muscle pain	– Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19
– Headache	
 - Do not allow staff with the new or worsening signs or symptoms listed above to return to work until:
 - In the case of a staff member who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to work when all three of the following criteria are met: at least 3 days (72 hours) have

MINIMUM STANDARD HEALTH PROTOCOLS



ZOOS, AQUARIUMS, CAVERNS: Page 2 of 3

passed *since recovery* (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); and the individual has *improvement* in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and at least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*; or

- In the case of a staff member who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to work until the individual has completed the same three-step criteria listed above; or
 - If the staff member has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis.
- Do not allow a staff member with known close contact to a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 to return to work until the end of the 14 day self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure (with an exception granted for healthcare workers and critical infrastructure workers).
- Have staff wash or sanitize their hands upon entering the zoo, aquarium, natural cavern, or similar facility, and between interactions with visitors.
- Have staff maintain at least 6 feet of separation from other individuals. If such distancing is not feasible, measures such as hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness, and sanitation should be rigorously practiced
- If meals are provided for staff, it is recommended to have the meal individually packed for each individual.

Health protocols for your facilities:

- Barricade off frequently touched items, like zoo bars and handrails, to the extent feasible.
- Regularly and frequently clean and disinfect any regularly touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, tables, chairs, and restrooms.
- Disinfect any items that come into contact with visitors.
- Make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant readily available to employees and visitors.
- Consider placing [readily visible signage](#) at the facility to remind everyone of best hygiene practices.
- Consider having an individual wholly or partially dedicated to ensuring the health protocols adopted by the employer are being successfully implemented and followed.

MINIMUM STANDARD HEALTH PROTOCOLS



ZOOS, AQUARIUMS, CAVERNS: Page 3 of 3

If you serve food and/or beverages:

- For waiter-provided food service:
 - Do not leave condiments, silverware, flatware, glassware, or other traditional table top items on an unoccupied table.
 - Provide condiments only upon request, and in single use (non-reusable) portions or in reusable containers that are cleaned and disinfected after each use.
 - Clean and disinfect the area used for dining (table, etc.) after each group of customers depart the theater.
 - Use disposable menus (new for each patron), or clean and disinfect reusable menus after each use.
 - If you allow customers to write down their food orders, provide take-home pencils and notepads that cannot be used by other customers.
 - Have wait staff sanitize or wash hands between interactions with customers.
- For counter food service:
 - Provide condiments or flatware only in single use, individually-wrapped items, and provide condiments only upon request.
 - Have employees and contractors follow proper food-handling protocols.
 - Disinfect any items that come into contact with customers.
- Clean and disinfect the area used for dining (table, etc.) after each group of customers depart, including the disinfecting of tables, chairs, stalls, and countertops.

If you have video game equipment or other interactive amusements:

- Assign at least one employee or contractor full time to disinfect the video games and other interactive amusements. **Continuous disinfecting is needed to protect customers.**
- Disinfect all gaming equipment before and after customer use.
- Provide equipment disinfecting products throughout facility for use on equipment.
- Ensure only one player can play a game at a time.
- Provide for at least 6 feet of separation between games.